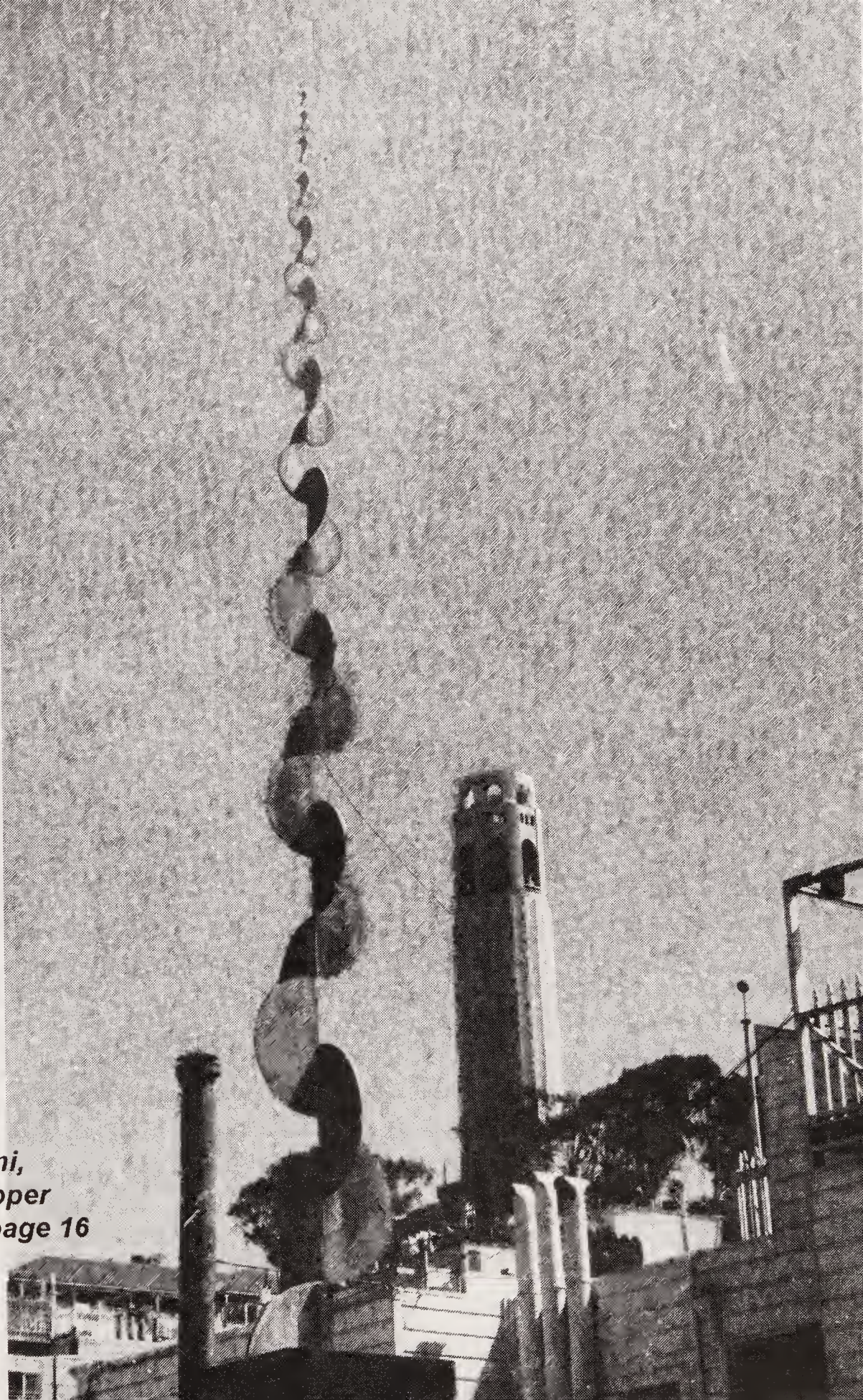


The Semaphore

Issue 132 June 1995

FEATURE

*Peter Macchiarini,
The Mayor of Upper
Grant Avenue, page 16*



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Printed on recycled paper.

COVER: Peter Macchiarini's 9-foot tall bronze sculpture "Dinamica" (Dynamic) on a Telegraph Hill rooftop. Photo by Peter Macchiarini.

The Semaphore is a publication of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers for its members. Articles, except for the summary of Board of Directors' Motions, do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Association or its Officers, but are the opinions of the writers of the individual signed articles. The Association can take no responsibility for their content. This membership publication is not to be reprinted or disseminated without permission in writing.

THD Board Resolutions

April 11, 1995:

THD Board agreed that a copy of the Telegraph Hill Scenic Special Use District Ordinance (Draft 3/1/95) would be mailed to THD members with an announcement of a General Membership meeting on April 27 to review it. Also, announcements of the meeting will be posted in the neighborhood and in at least one newspaper.

A motion was approved to send a letter to the Board of Supervisors supporting the interim controls prohibiting oversized illuminated or animated signs within 200 feet of Union Square.

May 9, 1995:

It was agreed that when the Board of Directors has approved the forthcoming revision of the proposed Telegraph Hill Scenic Special Use District Ordinance, copies of an approved Executive Summary will be mailed to THD members and a postal vote will be taken. Copies of the ordinance revised subsequent to the April 27 meeting will be available upon request.

The Board voted to oppose a proposed 50-foot Ferris wheel at Pier 39 on the basis of height limit, and for lack of sufficient additional information at this time.

Editor's Desk

Pat Cady

What do you think the rest of us can see, know, and do to enrich the experience of living in this neighborhood? What do you want to say about your own experiences and interests? Articles for *The Semaphore* -- and your letters -- are welcome. *The Semaphore* is widely read. Hill Dwellers constantly stimulate good ideas and productive actions that filter to other neighborhood associations throughout the City. Call me for due dates and suggested lengths of submissions, or for a nudge to set you free from torpor and inspire a turning point belief that you, too, can find the time to contribute.

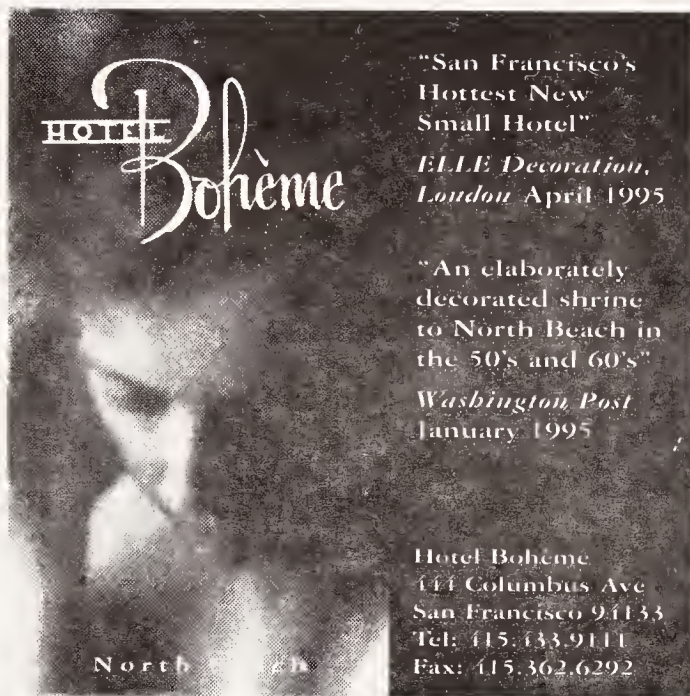
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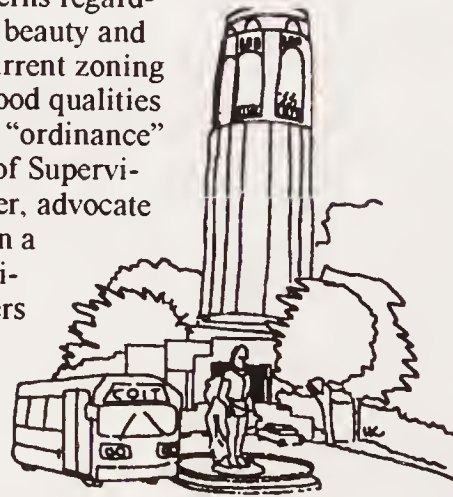
Telegraph Hill is springing into summer with Julie Christensen, one fabulous chairwoman of the 400 Trees Committee, and Friends of the Urban Forest, one fabulous organization. By now you no doubt know that FUF has obtained a California State grant which will cover the purchase and planting of 400 new street trees in North Beach and on Telegraph Hill. If ever we on The Hill have had the chance to make a difference, it is now. This year, 1995, can be our biggest year of planting trees, if we take the time and trouble to do so. We have only a few short months to take advantage of this fantastic opportunity. Let us grab this moment, go for the challenge and reap the beautiful rewards of a green neighborhood. Imagine walking in dappled sunlight where we now walk in sidewalk glare. The next time you leave your home count how many trees could be planted on your sidewalk. Urge each of your neighbors to plant these trees. Seven years ago we on Greenwich planted Ginkgo trees up our street. I invite you to see how they are doing.

At this writing, a THD committee is in the midst of revising a proposal to restrict development on Telegraph Hill. Concerns regarding the impact of bulky, burdensome developments on the beauty and charming character of our neighborhood go way back. Current zoning has not always proved adequate to preserve the neighborhood qualities we cherish. Our past president, Bob Tibbits, initiated this "ordinance" approach to establish a special district through the Board of Supervisors. On April 27th, Herb Kosovitz, long time Hill Dweller, advocate and architect, chaired our second public meeting to explain a proposed Telegraph Hill Scenic Conservation District Ordinance to hear comments from residents and property owners and to respond to questions. The meeting was very valuable. Many important points were noted, and the draft Ordinance is, at this writing, back to THD committee for final revisions. As you read this, the process will be one month or so further along.

Several other issues are before the Board and its committees. How do we feel about a 50-foot Ferris wheel at Pier 39? How about 19 parking stalls at 659 Columbus (the site of the old Record Hardware store)? How about tour buses going up and down any streets they choose? It has been a busy and productive spring for Telegraph Hill Dwellers. We welcome the enthusiasm of our Board members and our committees. We hope that you will find events on our calendar and articles in this Semaphore that spark your interest. Thanks to all of you who are active and involved in the neighborhood. It is a better place because of you.

President's Letter

From Mia Morrill



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Introducing New Members of the THD Board of Directors!

Dawne Bernhardt. A management communications consultant, Dawne coaches professionals and executives preparing for speeches and other presentations. She has lived on Telegraph Hill for 20 years and keeps fit by jogging up its steep streets. Dawne also enjoys skiing, tennis, the opera and symphony. She joined THD because, she says, "I care about the aesthetics of the Hill. This is a unique environment and should remain attractive."

Arthur Chang. Art, a former director of the Monterey Community Development Agency with focus on the waterfront and historic preservation, now is involved with international economic development and trade. He and wife Dorothy have lived in this area, on and off, for 20 years, and Art strongly supports THD's goals to maintain the Hill's unique character. "I also would like to work toward making our streets, especially in residential areas, become more pedestrian-oriented," he says.

Gerry Crowley. Gerry returns to the THD Board as vice president after past service as a Board member and Social Chairperson. She often is seen on local telethons on behalf of her employer, Blue Shield of California, and recently was honored by Irwin Memorial Blood Bank for her donations which now exceed 100 units. Gerry also is a long-time tutor at Galileo High. A Hill resident for 32 years, Gerry joined THD because, she says, "I believe that if you live in a community, you should participate in its activities."

Kara Parsons. Kara holds down the demanding job of Director of Print Advertising for all of Macy's Western Division. She came to San Francisco three years ago from New Jersey via Southern California. Together with husband John, Kara relaxes with bike riding, puzzle solving and cooking. She would like to involve more people in THD, "especially more young people. There are still a lot of people in this neighborhood who don't belong to THD."

Ken Scudder. Ken has been a Hill Dweller for 20 years and soon plans to wed another THDer, Kellin Defiel. Attorney Ken works in lawbook publishing and secondary education for lawyers. He's an avid motorcyclist, enjoys running, and also San Francisco's good food and wine. "I didn't find out about THD until I had lived here for a while," he says. "I joined because I liked what THD was doing and wanted to support it."

Linda Toan. Linda's goals as a member of the THD Board are, she says, "The same as for my life — a striving for the best quality of life for its Dwellers." A native Californian who grew up in the Bay Area, Linda teaches school in Daly City. She and husband Don, a licensed pilot, enjoy flying and recently returned from a trip to Hawaii. They spend many weekends at their getaway home at Tomales Bay.

Social News

by Jarilyn Cerruti, Social Chair

Castagnola's Andrew Lolli and staff once again provided a lovely setting and delicious food for the Telegraph Hill Dwellers' April Membership Dinner and Election of officers. After a lively discussion regarding the Telegraph Hill Special Scenic Use District, farewells were said to outgoing President Bob Tibbits. A proclamation was delivered from Senator Milton Marks setting aside April 12, 1995 as "Bob Tibbits Day" in recognition of his tireless efforts on behalf of the neighborhood.

June's major event is the annual North Beach Festival and Grant Avenue Street Fair on June 17 and 18. This year the North Beach Chamber of Commerce is co-sponsoring the event with a new production group; they plan high-quality crafts, and will emphasize the ethnicity of the neighborhood more than in the past. At the THD booth we hope to have more sweatshirts available for all of the friends and relatives who were unable to purchase them last year!

The All San Francisco Symphony Evening will once again be a popular drawing card for THD members. Due to the restricted number of tickets allotted to neighborhood groups, Symphony ticket purchases are limited to two per member. The date has not been set as we go to press. However, to guarantee your seats, please send \$7 per person, plus a

stamped self-addressed envelope to:

THD Symphony Event
P.O. Box 330159
San Francisco, CA 94133

No reservations will be accepted after July 7.

The picnic is coming... the picnic is coming... the picnic is coming... and a chairperson is needed for this annual September event. Please call Jarilyn Cerruti at 399-1022 if you are interested.



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41st Annual North Beach Festival Plans Exciting New Components

by Marsha Garland

This year, North Beach celebrates the 41st Anniversary of the North Beach Festival on Saturday and Sunday, Father's Day Weekend, June 17 and 18, 10 am to 6 pm. The fair will take place on the 1200-1500 blocks of Grant Avenue, the 500 block of Green Street and in Washington Square Park, in front of SS. Peter & Paul Church.

The North Beach Festival is the oldest street fair in San Francisco and is believed to be the oldest urban street fair in the country. It originated as the Grant Avenue Fair in 1954 and was organized by neighborhood artists and artisans, most notably sculptor/jeweler Peter Macchiarini. The festival focuses

on our neighborhood's Italian and Beatnik history.

For the first time, the North Beach Chamber of Commerce is acting both as sponsor and co-producer. Co-producing the event is Steven Bajor of Pro Event. Bajor is an old hand at our event having worked for previous promoters Pimsleur & Associates and Festival Productions.

The North Beach Festival will feature the following six components: original arts and crafts, ethnic food and beverage vendors, gourmet packaged food, small press and booksellers, music and entertainment, and street painting. Entertainment will include jazz, blues, Italian opera, tarantella and flamenco dancers.

Fair goers can try their hands at wood block printing guided by neighborhood artist Kristin Wetterhahn, or pizza dough tossing under the tutelage of pizza bakers from Viva Pizza. Pet owners are invited to bring their pets to the SPCA mobile outreach unit in Washington Square where all animals will be blessed in memory of St. Francis of Assisi by a local priest. And in keeping with the contemporary counter culture, ear piercing and temporary tattoos will be available.

Howard Munson, another neighborhood artist and instructor at the Academy of Art College, has designed another incredible poster, which will be available for purchase.



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It's summertime, even in Fog City, and time to put on your walking shoes, if not your hiking boots. Check out your own neighborhood, and then strike out to take a closer look at other San Francisco neighborhoods.

You can pick up City Guides' *Telegraph Hill Hike* on the first and third Thursdays, 5:30 pm at the Marconi monument at Lombard and Telegraph Hill Blvd. On the first Sunday of the month, the hike starts at noon. Perhaps you can contribute a tale or two, while you're soaking up the lore of our neighborhood.

Further afield (but not much), City Guides offers walks in Chinatown and North Beach at 10 am every Saturday, and Cow Hollow every Sunday at 10 am.

And you might want to while away a Monday lunch hour hearing about the brothels, boarding houses and bawds that once populated Maiden Lane.

Friends of the Urban Forest takes a slightly different view of San Francisco neighborhoods, with monthly tours of the urban forest on the fourth Saturday of every month from 10 am til noon. June is Park Presidio, July is Bernal Heights, and August is Presidio Heights.

For more information on the many City Guides tours, stop by the North Beach Library to pick up a schedule, or call 557-4266. Full information on the Friends of the Urban Forest tour schedule, which concludes with a Filbert Steps walk October 2, can be obtained by calling 543-5000.

Take a Hike!

by June Fraps

MEDITATION GROUP ON TELEGRAPH HILL

We are a small group of meditators on Telegraph and Russian Hills who are beginning a local weekly meditation group. If you are interested, please call David, 398-8789.

Planning Commission Denies 659 Columbus Demolition

Tenants of the former Record Hardware store left when they couldn't meet the rent hike imposed by the building's owner, who since applied for permission to demolish the attractive store and create 19 parking spaces.

June Osterberg represented THD at the Planning Commission meeting on May 11. She read a letter prepared by Jim Valenti, Co-Chair, Planning and Zoning, supporting the North Beach

Chamber's position expressed by Marsha Garland. In a letter read by Michael Garavaglia, Chamber Board member, Garland stated that residents and merchants would rather see a thriving business than have a perfectly sound building destroyed for parking. She cautioned that if we don't preserve North Beach's commercial properties, we won't need additional parking. Also present was Ron Edwards, proprietor of the neighboring We

Park Garage, who reported that the owner's goal to expand the adjacent lot previously occupied by a service station was compromised by the fact that he had not met legal requirements for removing contaminated soil.

By a unanimous vote, the Planning Commission denied the owner's demolition request. The owner stated his intent to appeal. We will report future developments.

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Telegraph Hill Scenic Special Use District Progress Report

Jim Valenti,
Planning and Zoning Co-Chair

The most recent version of the Telegraph Hill Scenic Special Use District (T.H.S.S.U.D.) zoning rules was completed in early April 1995 and submitted to the THD Board of Directors by the special committee convened to rewrite the ordinance. The committee tried to balance property owners' rights with the need to protect the unique Telegraph Hill environment, and from project sponsors who couldn't care less about the havoc their projects wreak. A copy of that draft was sent to all THD members, in mid-April and a public meeting was held at the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center on April 27, 1995. The meeting was chaired by Herb Kosovitz, who, after a brief introduction and history of the project, went through the ordinance item by item, fielding questions, comments and reactions to the document from the 50-plus people in attendance.

Committee members had anticipated a difficult evening of criticism from property owners regarding the possible loss of some development rights. However, there were some pleasant surprises for the commit-

tee, as a majority of the people present supported the spirit of the ordinance and several urged that it be empowered as soon as possible. There were many attending who had problems with the parts of the legislation that affected their properties. There were several astute observations, corrections and amendments proposed, and many anomalous existing conditions pointed out. (It seems most of the Telegraph Hill properties have eccentric "legal nonconforming" status, which is why the RH-3 zoning rules have proved to be so unsatisfactory to control overdevelopment in the neighborhood.) There was also a small contingent attending who felt the new zoning rules did not go far enough!

The special committee met during the second week in May to consider all the comments proffered and possible changes to the ordinance. A new draft, with an Executive Summary, will be voted on by the Board of Directors. When approved, the draft will be put to an organization-wide vote before submission to the Board of Supervisors. Once under their consideration, the

ordinance will be reviewed by the Supervisors' Land Use Committee for approximately six months. During that time there will be another round of public notice and review before the ordinance is presented to the Board of Supervisors for a vote. If approved by the Board, the legislation will be in place for 18 months so the City Planning Department can study how it works, the effects it has, and propose changes they think are required before it becomes a permanent zoning ordinance.

To receive an advance copy of the revised draft, send your request along with an SASE to:
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Hill Crime Statistics

by Pat Lorentzen

With the peak tourist season approaching, there will be more strangers and opportunists in the areas where visitors sightsee. Telegraph Hill, North Beach and Fisherman's Wharf are prime destinations for tourists, as is the North Beach Festival, (formerly North Beach Fair) June 17-18. We should certainly show San Francisco's warm hospitality to our visitors. But, it is most important to be vigilant and aware of those around you -- to know the difference between someone wanting directions and someone wanting to rip off your purse or wallet. Don't be a victim! Have a safe and happy summer.

For the FEBRUARY-APRIL Period

TYPE:	1994	1995	% CHANGE
Homicide	0	0	
Rape	3	0	
Robbery	13	18	
Assault	28	18	
Burglary	35	16	
Theft	97	99	
Auto	51	43	
Other	165	158	
TOTAL	392	352	-10.2%
TOTAL MAJOR*	227	194	-14.5%

*Homicide, Rape, Robbery, Assault, Burglary, Grand/Petty Theft, Auto Theft, Purse Snatch



Report on Our Financial Situation

by Maud Hallin, Treasurer

THD, like other non-profit organizations, depends heavily on volunteers. When volunteers experience burn-out, many tasks previously donated need to be delegated to outside services. We continue to be grateful for the many hours that our Board members and other volunteers so freely give. However, after running a deficit of \$7,016 last year, our coffers are down to minimum. Some years ago a special committee reiterated the Founders' desire to have a "buffer" of \$10,000 in case of litigation and to assure smooth operations. We have therefore found ourselves forced to raise the membership dues to \$25/Individual, \$40/Family and \$15/Senior.

Collecting dues, mailing out *The Semaphore* and notices to our members has become increasingly costly as paper and postage have increased. We believe insurance costs are high; on the other hand, Board members are not willing to serve without it. We are doing our very best to keep costs at a minimum. You can help by volunteering your services to one of the Committees listed on page

30, or by calling a Board member. Advertise your support by wearing our THD sweatshirts and t-shirts and plan to donate time and money to help with the 400 Trees Project described by Julie Christensen in this issue.

Thank you for your generous donations to THD:

Candace Crockett

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One Neat Telegraph Hill

by Dawne Bernhardt

Thanks to the following THD members who turned out for the Broom & Bag Brigade Saturday, April 29 to support this year's One Neat City Day:

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Peter Macchiarini - The Mayor of Upper Grant Avenue

by Billie Atlas

Before the Beatniks carved their initials into the bars and coffee houses of North Beach, Peter Macchiarini was one of San Francisco's most respected artists, noted for his sculptures and jewelry.

Today, with many of his works in museums and private collections, the 86-year-old Macchiarini is a living contradiction of the notion that mental decline is an inevitable part of old age. Still sharp-witted and with a prodigious memory, the "Mayor of Upper Grant Avenue" continues to work each weekday in his showroom/workshop at 1529 Grant Avenue, designing and crafting his unique jewelry.

The gregarious Macchiarini is interrupted now and then by friends and neighbors who stop by for a visit. He enjoys reminiscing about the Telegraph Hill-North Beach neighborhood which is as much a part of his life as he is a part of its history.

This month, with the annual North Beach Street Fair on the calendar, Macchiarini's thoughts are of the early '50s when he and

a group of other neighborhood artists and entrepreneurs organized the first Upper Grant Avenue Fair. A far cry, he'll tell you, from the event now produced by a professional street fair organization.

"Originally, the fair was staged by Upper Grant Avenue shop owners," explains Macchiarini. "The first committee included myself, my wife Virginia, leather worker Rhoda Pack, screenmaker Nobu Kitigaki, craftsperson Gretchen MacAllister, Lloyd Demrich who owned a surplus store, bead store proprietor Herman Baker, and Peter..." Here Macchiarini's memory fails him. "I can't remember Peter's last name. He owned a sandwich shop. Back then, the City Health Department didn't allow grocery stores to make sandwiches.

"We screened all the displays," he continues. "There was an admission charge to the fair and only the best craftspeople and artists were allowed to participate. There was quality, not only of displays, but of the atmosphere at the fair."



*Portrait of Peter Macchiarini
by Edward Brooks.*

This committee pretty much organized and ran the fair for 15 years, despite periodic efforts by the City to shut it down. Looking back, Macchiarini says he never understood the City's objections and harassment, though others have told him it might have been because he didn't "pay off" the right people.

"Those early street fairs brought a lot of good publicity to North Beach," says Macchiarini, "and projected positive images of the neighborhood."

Sculptor Benny Bufano was one of many prominent artists and performers honored at a banquet held each year before the fair opened. "At the banquet we

Continued on next page

Peter Macchiarini...

Continued from previous page

honored one person to whom the fair was dedicated that year," recalls Macchiarini. Some of those honored, besides Bufano, were photographers Imogene Cunningham and Ruth Bernhardt, the puppeteer Wolo, collector and impresario Henri Lenoir, painters John Varda and Bernard Zacheim, illustrator Giacomo Patri, and industrial designer Jo Sirrel.

When Macchiarini opened his first workshop in the 1400 block of Grant Avenue in January, 1948, North Beach was a small enclave with a distinct identity. He tells how he furnished and supplied his first shop with materials from an army surplus store across the street; and because he was short of funds, taught a jewelry class for a year until his art could support him.

The North Beach that Macchiarini so clearly remembers was of "craftspeople, artists, writers, and entrepreneurs joined in friendship with one another and kinship with the public," while centered in the culturally rich and colorful neighborhood then called "Little Italy."

"There used to be three drugstores," he says, "Rossi's,

now Malvina's Cafe; Reina's, now Martinelli's Restaurant (recently closed); and Roma, now Coit Liquors; and there was the Verdi Theater, now a Chinese store.

"Caffe Trieste was the first coffee house in San Francisco in the early '50s," says Macchiarini. "They came from Berkeley and had a hard time making it at first."

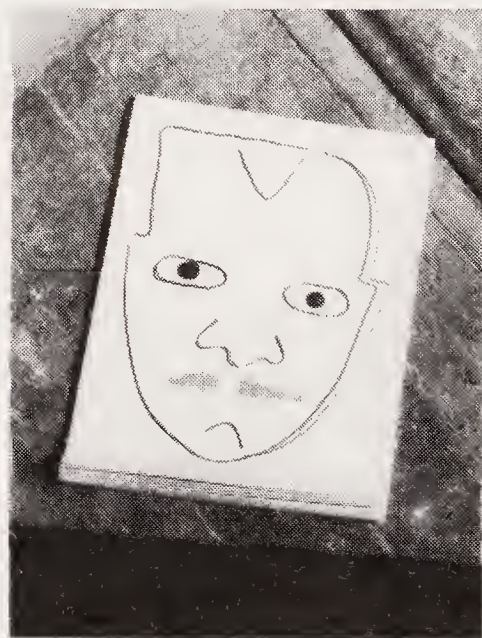
As for Washington Square Park: "It needed some landscaping, but they took out all the mounds and now it's a swamp when wet."

But what Macchiarini says he misses most is the friendship that existed among the shop owners of Upper Grant Avenue. "Now, when I visit the stores, I have to introduce myself," he laments. "It's become a different street."

What does Macchiarini think Upper Grant Avenue will be like in the future? "There will be lots of physical changes," he predicts, "with fewer restaurants. It will stand out as one of the outstanding places in San Francisco."

As for himself, there is one more thing he would like to accomplish, he says, and that is "an exhibit of my photographs,

which span more than 45 years of North Beach life, maybe at a gallery like the Museo Italo Americano at Fort Mason. I hope it will happen someday."



Peter Macchiarini's self-portrait -- a collage of wire and screen.

A Gentle Man of Quiet Strength: Elegy for Bob Katz

by Andreas W. Katz

Less than eight months earlier, my mother Nancy Katz died and my father, Robert, carried on as best he could without his "spark plug." On March 24, 1995, Bob Katz died. This has been a horrible year for me and I can't even capture what both their deaths have meant to me or how much I miss them. But I do think their greatest accomplishment was to live their lives passionately. After Nancy's death, Bob often talked about what a wonderful, full and adventurous life they shared together.

The tireless amount of energy they both put into so many civic issues was to them such a natural part of living on Telegraph Hill and being in love with the Hill and its surroundings for over 40 years. I will always have an image in my mind of my father at his manual Olympia typewriter in his office in the basement of our house. There he sat banging away on the keys, often with the cat Cassidy in his lap, churning out countless letters and always keeping a carbon copy. Surrounding him were file cabinets filled with the history of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers' successful battles. Many of these both Bob and Nancy had played vital

roles in as founding and very active members of the organization. For Bob, a recurring issue was how to protect the waterfront from overdevelopment and to preserve open space for people to enjoy. But whatever issue he was working on, you could be sure he was carefully documenting his case. He was like that in all that he did: his Swiss lawyer mind gathered all the facts. Years later, when an issue would resurface, Bob knew just where to dig up the information in his files to attack it. And we always knew he was looking out for us. Nancy called him her "Rock of Gibraltar." He had the quiet confidence and strength to compliment Nancy's fire and pizzazz.

I was so glad when he came with me to the Telegraph Hill Dwellers' 40th Anniversary dinner. He spoke of what really mattered to Nancy and himself and what he said deserves to be quoted here:

"It so happens that Nancy gave the accidental kick that created the Telegraph Hill Dwellers by saving the 39 bus. And then came the question of how to name our organization. And the first

name was Telegraph Hill Property Owners Association and then we decided, no, Telegraph Hill is such an extraordinary place, and so inhabited by renters that renters should certainly be included. So with the flair of the dramatic that Nancy had, it was called the Telegraph Hill Dwellers. Now, I always... wanted to -- and never got around to it -- write a little pamphlet: *What this City Would Have Been Without Us*. And by "us" I don't mean the Telegraph Hill Dwellers alone but the Telegraph Hill Dwellers with all of their allies. We would have had a... and I'm not going to go through the whole list but... we would have had a freeway all the way around the Embarcadero -- raised. We would have had a bridge going from Telegraph Hill to Angel Island to Tiburon with a toll booth on the top of Telegraph Hill, we would have had a 1 1/2 times the size of Alcatraz monster called "Ferry Port Plaza." We would have had a 500-foot U.S. Steel building... One of the most beautiful parks in the city, Washington Square Park, would have become a garage raising 13 feet above the street at one point.

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I can't tell you what all else would have happened. We now have many successes like this beautiful recreational park on Pier 7 which is a great tribute to our friend Randy Rossi.

"And the other thing I wanted to say... when I still had my eyesight I liked to read a lot. And I always remember Voltaire's *Candide* which ends by Voltaire - who had a very spectacular and revolutionary writing career -- saying now at the end "*Je veux cultiver mon jardin.*" And I think that what the neighborhoods have done in this city is to cultivate our garden and that we have done together. And I am very privileged to have shared in it because if life is about anything it is about sharing. And I thank you."

Bob shared a lot with me over our years together: a gentle guiding hand, his charming wit and penchant for "bad" puns; and his wonderful analytical skills which made him such a good teacher. But most importantly, he shared an example of how to stand up for what you believe in. A quote on the bulletin board in his office puts it quite nicely: "There is a quiet way one can fight and win battles whose harvest survives the fighters." This was Bob's way. I am so proud that he was to have received the annual Jack

Morrison Environmental Award from San Francisco Tomorrow in May. I will accept it for him with the hope that I can leave such a wonderful legacy when I am done.

It would be a great tribute if the first tree of the 400 Trees Project could be planted in memory of Robert Katz. The date for a memorial service has not been set. To participate, please phone 986-1890.

Contributions in Bob's memory can be made to Save San Francisco Bay Association, 1736 Franklin St., Oakland, CA 94612.

A Gentle Man...



Bob Katz "spoke of what really mattered to Nancy and to himself" at THD's 40th Anniversary dinner.

Good Friends

by Patricia Cady

John Lyon Reid AIA ran an architectural design firm on Stevenson Street that became a magnet for young phenoms. In the 1950's THD Director Dick Marshall and John Coyle, a 30-year resident of Telegraph Hill, began a friendship nourished by a lot of good stories that took place when San Francisco was still a small town and most people seemed to have the time and money to thoroughly enjoy themselves.

Reid's people were considered the best. Career counselling then consisted of professors telling their star students to try to get a job with Reid who intuited talent and ran a type of unaccredited post-graduate school. He hired good draftsmen and architects on the spot, whether or not there was space for them. John Coyle managed draftsmen for two years before he had a desk to call his own. Dick Marshall remembers John as the glue who held the place together, including the boss, a high-strung diabetic whom Coyle unofficially monitored for emergency orange juice fixes. Marshall was a project architect amid an intense staff that competed primarily with themselves. He became head of the Architecture Department at Bengal Engineering College at the University of Calcutta, succeeded by two other Reid architects. "Any one of us could do a major project," Marshall recalls. "We

went out on weekends and took pictures of Reid's prize-winning buildings for our own enjoyment and pride." The company specialized in building schools with flexible-space interiors that could be configured to meet changing needs, an innovative idea then, as it is (again) now.

Working for Reid was considered a privilege and nobody dreamed of negotiating big salaries. Staff filled out time sheets (Reid had literally thrown out of a window a time clock purchased by a former partner), and young architects earned as much as three dollars an hour. The benefits package consisted mainly of optional long lunches at Harrington's on Jones where Harry Bridges also ate, and proximity to the bar of the Palace Hotel; they took turns delivering empties and returning to the office bearing trays of fresh 50-cent Martinis.

Forty-plus years later John Coyle and Dick Marshall are still good friends, both still designing buildings. Now and then they get together with some of the three or four dozen architects who also worked with Reid, several of whom live on Telegraph Hill, and are welcome to share with *The Semaphore* their own memories.

A. Cavalli & Co.

Since 1880

by Helen von Ammon

"A man who has not been in Italy is always conscious of an inferiority." Samuel Johnson in Boswell's LIFE."

Is that what's bugging you, Bucky? Remove this demeaning stigma with a trip to Italy, more fun than any psychiatrist and probably cheaper. A. Cavalli & Co. at Columbus and Green is *the* one stop source for your excursion. Start with guide books to decide which areas and cities to visit and how much time to plan for each. Maps of Italian cities and regions will help you select hotels and the location of every Michelangelo masterpiece. Classic Italian and "healthy" cookbooks will tantalize you with local specialties. Ten Italian newspapers provide Italian news, soccer scores, weather and local gossip. Learn Italian with tapes, books, dictionaries. John Valentini, owner of this small, incredibly eclectic store of everything Italian, can recommend Italian language lessons or private tutors. Fact is, you'll be saturated in everything Italian.

A. Cavalli & Co. has been a North Beach institution, known world-wide, since it was founded in 1880 by Georgio Cavalli, a



Swiss emigrant. Originally on Columbus Avenue at the site of the present Transamerica Building, damage from the 1906 earthquake temporarily closed the store. It reopened where City Lights Bookstore is, "A kind of library where books are sold." The next move, bigger and better, was the building where Vcsuvio is, "Always serving drinks for reasonable prices." The final move was in 1934 to its present location at 1441 Stockton when the building was erected. Through location changes, alternately larger and smaller space, the store has remained in the Valentini family since 1927. John became proprietor in 1979.

The balcony, which rims the store's high ceiling, houses office equipment and a computer. This

hardly seem enough to run the myriad details of such varied inventory. Yet without bar codes and other arcane merchandising devices, it works. As John points out, when you're in business for yourself you do everything. Housekeeping to bookkeeping, he, wife Rosanna and sometimes son Eric, do it all.

When the store was larger, inventory included sheet music, musical instruments, phonographs, typewriters and radios. John's father, John Sr., was an avid opera devotee and sponsored autograph parties in the store. A photograph on the wall attests to music lovers who waited eagerly in long lines to have books, records and photographs signed by opera stars such as lyric soprano Renata Tebaldi, DeStefano, DeMonaco, Pavorroti and Arthur Fiedler. Other wall photographs show St. Francis of Assisi Church in 1865 and the Cavalli City Lights location in 1915. In the present smaller store, recordings, films and books have replaced musical instruments and sheet music.

A. Cavalli & Co. carries an astonishing variety of Italian

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magazines and John doesn't yell at you for a look through. BOOK MODA, the world's most beautiful fashion magazine, at \$79.95, will wipe out your walking around money. But think of this, Italian fashions are three years ahead of San Francisco. From the Autumn 1995 issue: "...today quite amazingly we discover that ugly old second hand and recycled clothes have become a trend. But an ecological one!" Ace bandage skirts are still holding, huge, huggy coats will be strong for winter. Fake furs are amazingly realistic as are see-through tops and shapely shaved heads.

Lamps to Lancia and Ferrari automobiles, Italian designs are sleekly superb. A. Cavalli can't assuage your Ferrari fixation, but you can buy stove top coffee machines from \$16 to \$65 and pasta machines which are also favored for Asian pasta versions. Italian flags, keyrings, magnets, printed dish towels -- everything for the gadget minded. Good quality t-shirts and sweats at \$22 to \$40 emblazoned with ITALIA. Try on a handsome lightweight windbreaker. White or black nylon with red and green trim -- your choice at \$60.

Wow your little cabbages by reading to them in Italian from beautifully illustrated children's books. At \$24.95 it's hard to resist any of Uncle Walt's classic

films in Italian - PINOCCHIO, DUMBO, La BELLA e la BESTIA and more. The store is so well known the building owner named it Cavalli Building, and the old gold letters remain above the door at 1445 Stockton. Consequently everyone thinks John Valentini owns the building. He wishes it were so! This property incorporates Eureka Bank, Joseph Festinese - Tailor, Eastwind Books & Arts. In 1939 John's grandfather had the opportunity to buy the whole bundle for \$30,000. He, and lots of other Italians in those days, thought the price was too high. Many Italians would like to return to the area but little space remains and now it really is too high.

"Vacation in Italy is out of the question," you say. Read on. Immerse yourself in A. Cavalli & Co. resources. All the knowledge acquired will enable you to pontificate like a travel writer. John will sell you an FBI (FULL BLOODED ITALIAN) t-shirt and dozens of assorted slides of Italy. Who's to know you didn't go? After having been bored spitless by all your friends' vacation pictures, retribution will be sweet.

A. Cavalli...



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400 Trees, 1995

by Julienne M. Christensen



Joe Luttrell's recent *Semaphore* article about THD's first 40 years made me think of the film "It's a Wonderful Life." What

would Telegraph Hill be like in 1995 if not for the love and labors of those have given their time and energy on our behalf? There is no concrete high-rise at Montgomery and Union; Mario's and Malvina's, Moose's and SS. Peter and Paul look out onto a park and not a multi-story parking garage; the Embarcadero Freeway was never allowed to complete its strangling grip around the neighborhood, its exit ramp tentacles piercing as far as Stockton and Greenwich; the North Beach Garage has not been replaced by the toothless grin of a lumpy, asphalt slab.

While some labored against negative change, others, as determined and persevering, labored for positive change. And so we have the gardens: Marchant, Pimentell, Early. We have the safer and more beautiful lookout at Kearny and Vallejo thanks to Gerry Hurtado and his neighbors. We have trees in Washington Square, planted in thanks to the living and in

memory of the deceased, due to Maud Hallin's gentle nudges.

And now, to celebrate 40 years of organizing, complaining, urging and striving, the Telegraph Hill Dwellers have a project that seems a perfect blend of both types of activism. Friends of the Urban Forest, a non-profit organization responsible for the planting of over 18,000 street trees in San Francisco, has obtained a grant from the State of California which will cover expenses related to the planting of 400 new street trees in North Beach and Telegraph Hill. THD is administering the grant as a visible legacy to celebrate its 40th year.

The grant is not open-ended: all trees must be planted by December of this year. But nearly all of the expenses -- trees, permits, concrete excavation, digging, stakes, ties, etc. -- will be covered for qualifying building owners. This is an opportunity to make an enormous, highly visible impact on our neighborhood. It is a chance for each one of us to contribute to the lives of those around us, to the life of our neighborhood, and to the lives of those who will come after us.

Tree-lined street. The phrase conjures images of fragrant,

sunny Saturday mornings; of rustling, crisp autumn afternoons; of playing children and strolling lovers and grandmas sweeping steps; of softness and gentility. Trees slow the gusts and dust on our windy hills. They reduce glare. They soften the shouting voices and sharp footfalls and grinding engine noises on our narrow streets. They add fragrance and color. They increase the value of property, always appearing in the real estate agents' lists of building assets.

But San Francisco has 61% fewer street trees than the National Park and Recreation Department standard, fewer than Oakland and many other Bay Area cities. It is estimated that between 5,000 and 8,000 trees die in San Francisco every year because of old age, disease, vandalism and construction. The City's Department of Public Works has had its budget slashed and is planting only about 200 trees each year.

So, as residents committed to your neighborhood, what can you do? You can talk up the project to those you think may participate. You can offer to be a coordinator on your street, and/or pass on the names of others who

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might help. You can plant a tree and encourage your neighbors to do the same. You can make a monetary donation to the project: grants will cover the trees and all expenses related directly to them but will not cover printing, mailing or any peripheral expenses. A check, payable to THD on behalf of the 400 Trees project, will help immensely.

THD has printed flyers explaining the project -- what areas are involved, where trees can be placed, the process involved in applying for and maintaining a tree. For copies, telephone Julie Christensen, 400 Trees Chair, at 989-4300.

400 Trees...

Your contributions will help our team distribute information and assist property owners and tenants who want to take this opportunity to beautify their neighborhoods. Please make your check to THD and clearly designate it "400 Trees." Mail it to P.O. Box 330159, San Francisco, CA 94133. Thanks to contributors: Maggie Baylis, F. Joseph Butler, Maud Hallin, William D. Tichy, Rod Freebairn-Smith, and Linda Toan.

Please let Julie Christensen know if you would be willing to organize a garage sale, all profits going to the 400 Trees Project.

Profits from the sale of a totally new cleaning concept, TRASAN (see ad below) will be donated to the project.

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Julius' Castle Reopens

by Billie Atlas

One of Telegraph Hill's most familiar landmarks, Julius' Castle restaurant at Greenwich and Montgomery Streets, recently reopened after a one-million-dollar renovation by owner Jeffrey Pollack.

The turreted restaurant with its magnificent views has long been a magnet for tourists and a favorite destination for San Franciscans entertaining visitors. Old-timers recall that during World War II the Castle bar was a popular hangout for hundreds of servicemen, who later would wend their noisy ways down the winding streets and steps of the Hill to their waiting ships.

Julius' Castle was built in 1922 by an Italian immigrant, Julius Roz, on the old concrete foundation of a house destroyed by fire. Much of the restaurant's interior woodwork of maple and redwood burl was salvaged from the 1915 Pan Pacific Exposition.

According to David F. Myrick in his book, "San Francisco's Telegraph Hill," Montgomery Street at that time ended at Alta. A narrow road was built to the restaurant and a turntable was used to turn cars around so they could be parked by a teenage "valet." During its early years, the restaurant was famous for its 65-cent lunches.

Julius' Castle has been the site of several very enjoyable THD Christmas parties during recent years.

What's Free, Comes In Different Sizes and Must Be Returned?

by Gardner Haskell, Manager
North Beach Library

Books at your local library! Thanks to the San Francisco voters who voted "Yes" on Prop E last year.

As a result, our Public Library System has more books and more hours. The new hours of the North Beach Branch are:

Monday 12-6; Tuesday 10-9;
Wednesday 1-9; Thursday 10-6;
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The North Beach Library is located at the corner of Columbus and Mason Streets. Thank you for your support.



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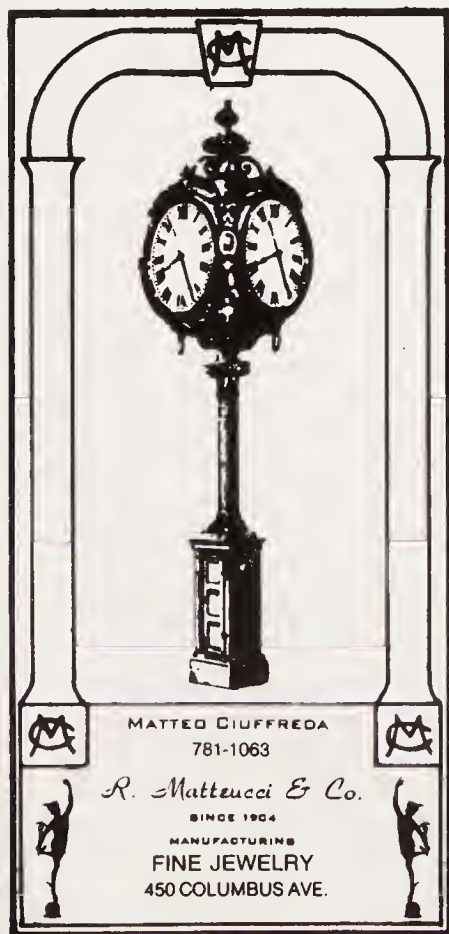
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Reporter's Notebook

by Clyde Steiner

The Hoop

The alley behind the Telegraph Hill Center is crowded with bicycles and their teenage riders, marking time and defending their space by retro-pedaling back and forth in a balancing act. No high tech BMX racing bikes here, or even trail bikes for the Marin Headlands. Just single sprocket-wheel clunkers like the ones Norman Rockwell's cute kids rode in our imagination.

Outside the gate, on the sidewalk, more bike riders make disorganized, slow circles. They take the luxury of the wide sidewalk to maneuver for position without having to use the retro-peddal technique.

These kids have that wide open naive sparkle in their eyes that comes from expectation of a world not yet discovered, but soon to be opened before them. Eagerness. But eagerness tempered with the already known necessity of holding on to your own space. These are city kids. Kids who live in and around Telegraph Hill.

They are part of the fourteen to eighteen year old crowd that gathers at the Tel-Hi center Monday to Friday at 6 pm. They are waiting for their chance to play basketball.

These pickup hoop games have been going on for a couple of years at that full-sized gym behind the center's modern building on Lombard. The kids shoot a couple of lay-up shots, and practice their deviousness in dribbling the ball. Sometimes parents and friends watch from the gym's bleachers, most of the time it is just a casual pick up game.

Except on Thursday nights when the adults have the gym and the kids crowd in for a chance to play with real basketball men. On those nights there can be as many as thirty eager kids hoping for their chance.

Henry, who coaches the teens, is now going to be coaching a disciplined team, as Tel-Hi joins the Bay Area hoop league. Warm up games have already been played with East Palo Alto and Menlo Park. They'll sport their colors with red and white uniforms under the Cougar name. They already have a poster of the Cougar on the wall.

The gym at Tel-Hi is a place where future Sports Channel stars hope to get their start. Check it out any Monday to Friday night from 6 pm to 8 pm.

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You can make a difference! Join one of THD's committees, meet and work with your fellow Hill Dwellers to improve life on the Hill.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Crime Prevention. Pat Lorentzen, 781-0456. Organizes S.A.F.E. neighborhood watch groups and works with Police Department on local crime problems. Participates in Police Community Relations Committee.

Hills Angels. Mia Morill, 982-4850. Getting families together for fun with their children and to work on projects to improve our environment on Telegraph Hill.

Landmarks and History. Joe Luttrell, 255-6400. Conducts walking tours that highlight Telegraph Hill's colorful past and historic buildings.

Neighborhood Improvement. Dawne Bernhardt, 982-3314; A.S. Chang, 981-5282. Deals with graffiti, litter and illegal dumping on the Hill; works with Clean City Coalition on periodic neighborhood sweep-ups.

N.E.R.T. June Fraps, 392-1187. Energizes members to take emergency disaster response training program sponsored by the City.

Neighborhood Liaison. Sue Cauthen, 391-0737. Represents THD on League of Neighborhoods.

Parking and Transportation. Gerry Hurtado, 788-7723. Represents THD residents before City agencies on traffic control, curb markings and MUNI service, cooperating with other neighborhood groups.

400 Trees. Julie Christensen, 989-4300. Coordinates plantings of 400 trees in North Beach and Telegraph Hill from July to December, 1995, through a California State grant obtained by Friends of the Urban Forest.

Planning and Zoning. Jim Valenti, 398-0076; Dick Marshall, 834-1012. Assists neighbors with zoning issues and Discretionary Reviews; represents THD positions before Planning Commission and works with developers and the City to protect neighborhood character.

Waterfront/Embarcadero. Bob Tibbits, 986-2622. Monitors DPW activities along the Embarcadero roadway and participates in planning committee meetings.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Budget. Maud Hallin, 781-3761. As prescribed in By-Laws for Treasurer.

Membership. Bob Ilse, 291-0420. As prescribed in By-Laws for Financial Secretary.

Program. Jarilyn Cerruti, 399-1022. Arranges social events, including quarterly membership meetings and get-aquainted social functions; organizes annual picnic.

Semaphore. Pat Cady, 397-2175. The editor and staff produce a quarterly magazine for THD members.

Wanted to Rent

Garage, parking space or driveway in the Grant/Lombard vicinity. Gerry Crowley, 445-5166 or 781-4201.

To place a classified ad call
Steve Hord at 781-1117

REMEMBERING AVRUM

by Helen von Ammon

Issue #126 of *The Semaphore*, December 1993, published my interview with one of the most unique men I've ever met. The piece was entitled "Avrum Rubenstein Contemporary Archaeology." Avrum is no longer contemporary. He died of cancer on January 26, 1995. Individualist to the very last, he insisted that there were to be no announcements, publicity or funeral. Only months later has his family agreed to my writing this.

His Grant Avenue gallery, The Scene, is already being prepared for a new tenant. The Shlock Shop will be the next to go unless there's an infusion from customers during the summer. Under the management of a young relative with the charming name of Aleksandra Khory, the windows have been washed, the counters dusted. But the eclectic contents of the glass cases remain as interesting and varied as when Avrum presided, avidly reading a book or fiddling with beadwork.

Among the unusual collection you will find uniquely colored Depression glass and quaint hand carved articulated "cork people" figures which are used as bottle stoppers.

If you've never been in The Shlock Shop, do go now. Take your-out-of-town guests. They won't see anything like this in Sopchoppy, Florida. At summer's end the Rubenstein family will decide whether they can afford to keep this remarkable museum/shop or say sayonara.

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THD CALENDAR

Saturday and Sunday, June 17-18: SEE YOU AT THE
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Reserve for THD's Symphony Event by July 7.

City Guides' Telegraph Hill Hikes. Every first Sunday at
noon. First and third Thursdays at 5:30 pm. Meet at the
Marconi Monument at Lombard and Telegraph Hill Blvd.
For other walks, pick up a schedule from the North Beach
Library or call 543-5000.

North Beach Walk, every Saturday, 10 am.
Meet at Coit Tower.

Parking and Traffic Committee meets every second Saturday
at 11 am. Call 788-7723, or meet at The Gathering Caffe,
1326 Grant Avenue.